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fact that the information can be found elsewhere in the book. To give an example: there are several *Tensons*, but the notes never tell who was Sordello's adversary: that has to be found somewhere in one of the early chapters, so that a reader may be obliged to search through thirty pages to get the information he needs. The notes to the famous *planh* do not give us any information about the persons referred to, and we are surprised to find them named on pp. 71 and 72, under the chapter on *Sordello Poeta*.

On the other hand, as a work of wide erudition, sound learning, and sane common-sense, this volume will be recognized as a credit to Italian scholarship.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION IN ENGLISH.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—The writer believes that the following remarks on the courses of reading in English recommended by the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland by one who does not work in that territory will not appear ungracious, because he has conformed to those recommendations and more especially because we are all, as teachers of English, interested in the one great purpose of trying to secure the best results. The recommendations are in the main excellent, and are already producing good results. I would call attention to two points in the courses as mapped out for the next four years.

The best interests of teachers in the preparatory schools require that the change of courses from year to year be gradual. Teachers who have to work in Greek, Latin, and Mathematics, as well as in English, and who have to remain in the schoolroom five or six hours each day, can not usually find the time to prepare properly entirely new courses each year. Nor is there any special reason why any course should be largely different from the preceding one. A certain variety is naturally desirable;

beyond that there is no imperative demand. Of the ten pieces set for 1897 and the thirteen for 1898, only one short piece is common to the two years. In the courses for 1899 and 1900, the true plan seems to have been discovered—that of building each course upon the preceding with changes enough to prevent sameness and stagnation—so that, perhaps, it was not necessary, so far as future courses are concerned, to bring up that subject here.

As regards the choice of books, there will always be ground for difference of opinion, but no harm can come out of the expression of these different opinions, and impartial discussion of the subject by those interested in the teaching of English may result in good. Besides the objection to Defoe's *History of the Plague in London* made in the public press already, it may well be doubted whether the book is of sufficient literary value and importance to have a place here. To the two Books of *Paradise Lost* there are two objections. My experience is that *Paradise Lost* for anything approaching just appreciation is beyond the capacity of men who have not yet finished their preparatory work. I have found that it gives sophomores all they can do. I have never yet gotten satisfactory results even from the shorter poems of Milton which have been set for entrance examination, especially *Lycidas*. The second objection is that the two Books are but fragments of the poem, and fragments are nearly always unsatisfactory. Students should be encouraged to read books completely. This latter objection applies to Pope's translation of the *Iliad*. Furthermore the *Iliad* is foreign to the spirit of those who have not had training in the classics. Would it not be better to confine this reading to works that are originally English? If Pope must be read at all I should almost prefer *The Rape of the Lock*. Would it not be better to postpone *Palamon and Arcite* till the student can read Chaucer? *Macbeth* seems to me too heavy. Let Shakespeare be assigned only for reading, and then only such plays as *The Merchant of Venice* and *As you like it*, and not the mighty tragedies. In this connection Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* might be found useful.

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